

DISABILITY HISTORY TIMELINE¹

1817

The American School for the Deaf is founded in Hartford, Connecticut. This is the first school for disabled children anywhere in the Western Hemisphere.

1848

The Perkins Institution, founded by Samuel Gridley Howe in Boston, Massachusetts, was the first residential institution for people with mental retardation. Over the next century, hundreds of thousands of developmentally disabled children and adults were institutionalized, many for the rest of their lives.

1864

Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind was authorized by the U.S. Congress to grant college degrees. It was the first college in the world established for people with disabilities.

1859

Charles Darwin publishes his controversial book *The Origin of the Species*. Many of his findings on natural selection were manipulated by social scientists to justify discrimination based on race, ethnicity and disability. Social Darwinism influenced public attitudes and policies (especially eugenics) through the first half of the twentieth century.

1883

Eugenics is a term that was coined by Sir Francis Galton in his book Essays in Eugenics. Americans embraced the eugenics movement by passing laws to prevent people with disabilities from moving to the U.S., marrying or having children. Eugenics laws led to the institutionalization and forced sterilization of disabled adults and children.

1912

The Kallikak Family by Henry H. Goddard was a best selling book. It proposed that disability was linked to immorality and alleged that both were tied to genetics. It advanced the agenda of the eugenics movement.

The Threat of the Feeble Minded (pamphlet) created a climate of hysteria allowing for massive human rights abuses of people with disabilities, including institutionalization and forced sterilization.

1918

The Smith-Sears Veterans Rehabilitation Act provided for the promotion of vocational rehabilitation and return to civil employment of disabled persons discharged from U.S. military.

¹ Timeline information taken from the Temple University website. Paul Longmore, PhD, <http://isc.temple.edu/neighbor/ds/disabilityrightstimeline.htm>.

1924

The Commonwealth of Virginia passed a state law that allowed for sterilization (without consent) of individuals found to be “feeble-minded, insane, depressed, mentally handicapped, epileptic and other.” Alcoholics, criminals and drug addicts were also sterilized.

1927

The Buck v. Bell Supreme Court decision ruled that forced sterilization of people with disabilities was not a violation of their constitutional rights. This decision removed all restraints for eugenicists. By the 1970s, over 60,000 disabled people were sterilized without their consent.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Commonwealth of Virginia eugenic laws as constitutional. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes equated sterilization to vaccination. Nationally, twenty-seven states began wholesale sterilization of “undesirables.”

1932

In order to take advantage of the popularity of Tod Browning’s previous film *Dracula* the production head for MGM commissioned a new project, to be “even more horrible.” *Freaks* was released to near universal criticism. It received so much bad press and created such ill will that MGM was forced to withdraw it from circulation, suffering a loss of \$164,000.

1935

The League for the Physically Handicapped in New York City formed to protest discrimination against disabled persons within the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The Home Relief Bureau of New York City stamped all applications with “PH” which stood for physically handicapped. Members of the League held a sit-in at the Home Relief Bureau for nine days and a weekend sit-in at the WPA headquarters. These actions eventually led to the creation of 1500 jobs in New York City.

The Social Security Act was passed. This established federally funded old-age benefits and funds to states for assistance to blind individuals and disabled children. The Act extended existing vocational rehabilitation programs.

1939

World War II began. Hitler ordered widespread mercy killing of the sick and disabled. The Nazi euthanasia program (code name Aktion T-4) was instituted to eliminate “life unworthy of life.”

1940

The National Federation of the Blind was formed in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania by Jacobus Broek and others. They advocated reforms including white cane laws and input by blind people for programs for the blind.

The American Federation of the Physically Handicapped, founded by Paul Strachan, was the first cross-disability national political organization to urge an end to job discrimination, lobby for passage of legislation, and to call for a National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week and other initiatives.

1942

Henry Viscardi, an American Red Cross volunteer, trained hundreds of disabled soldiers to use their prosthetic limbs. His work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. drew the attention of Howard Rusk and Eleanor Roosevelt, who protested when Viscardi's program was terminated by the Red Cross and the military.

1943

The LaFollette-Barden Vocational Rehabilitation Act added physical rehabilitation to the goals of federally funded vocational rehabilitation programs and provided funding for certain health care services.

1944

Howard Rusk began a rehabilitation program for disabled airmen at the U.S. Army Air Force Convalescent Center in Pawling, New York. Dubbed "Rusk's Folly" by the medical establishment, rehabilitation medicine became a new medical specialty.

1945

President Harry Truman signed PL-176 creating an annual National Employ the Handicapped Week.

1946

The Hill-Burton Act (also known as the Hospital Survey and Construction Act) authorized federal grants to states for the construction of hospitals, public health centers and health facilities for rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

The National Mental Health Foundation was founded by World War II conscientious objectors who served as attendants at state mental institutions rather than in the war. The Foundation exposed the abusive conditions at these facilities and became an impetus toward deinstitutionalization.

1947

The President's Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week was held in Washington, D.C. Publicity campaigns, coordinated by state and local committees, emphasized the competence of people with disabilities and used movie trailers, billboards, radio and television ads to convince the public that it was good business to hire the handicapped.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America was organized.

1948

The National Paraplegia Foundation, founded by members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America as the civilian arm of their growing movement, took a leading role in advocating for disability rights.

University of Illinois at Galesburg disabled students' program was officially founded and directed by Timothy Nugent. The program moved to the campus at Urbana-Champaign where it became a prototype for disabled student programs and independent living centers across the country.

We Are Not Alone (WANA), a mental patients' self-help group, was organized at the Rockland State Hospital in New York City.

1950

Mary Switzer was appointed the Director of the U.S. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation where she emphasized independent living as a quality of life issue.

Social Security Amendments established a federal-state program to aid permanently and totally disabled persons.

1951

Howard Rusk opened the Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine at the New York University Medical Center in New York City.

1952

The President's Committee on National Employment of the Physically Handicapped Week became the President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, a permanent organization reporting to the President and Congress.

1953

Los Angeles County provided at-home attendant care to adults with polio as a cost-saving alternative to hospitalization.

1954

Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments were passed that authorized federal grants to expand programs available to people with physical disabilities.

Mary Switzer, Director of the U.S. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, authorized funds for more than 100 university-based rehabilitation-related programs.

Social Security Act of 1935 was amended by PL 83-761 to include a freeze provision for workers who were forced by disability to leave the workforce. This protected their benefits by freezing their retirement benefits at their pre-disability level.

1956

Social Security Amendments of 1956 created the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program for disabled workers aged 50 to 64.

1958

Social Security Amendments of 1958 extended Social Security Disability Insurance benefits to dependents of disabled workers.

Rehabilitation Gazette (formerly known as the Toomeyville Gazette), edited by Gini Laurie, was a grassroots publication which became an early voice for disability rights, independent living and cross-disability organizing. It featured articles by writers with disabilities.

1960

Social Security Amendments of 1960 eliminated the restriction that disabled workers receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits must be 50 or older.

1961

President Kennedy appointed a special President's Panel on Mental Retardation.

The American National Standard Institute, Inc. (ANSI) published American Standard Specifications for Making Buildings Accessible to, and Usable by, the Physically Handicapped. This landmark document became the basis for subsequent architectural access codes.

1962

The President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped was renamed the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped reflecting increased interest in employment issues affecting people with cognitive disabilities and mental illness.

1963

President Kennedy called for a reduction "over a number of years and by hundreds of thousands, (in the number) of persons confined" to residential institutions and asks that methods be found "to retain in and return to the community the mentally ill and mentally retarded, and thereto restore and revitalize their lives through better health programs and strengthened educational and rehabilitation services." This resulted in deinstitutionalization and increased community services.

The Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Health Centers Construction Act authorized federal grants for the construction of public and private nonprofit community mental health centers.

South Carolina passed the first statewide architectural access code.

1965

Medicare and Medicaid were established through passage of the Social Security Amendments of 1965, providing federally subsidized health care to disabled and elderly Americans covered by the Social Security program. These amendments changed the

definition of disability under Social Security Disability Insurance program from “of long continued and indefinite duration” to “expected to last for not less than 12 months.”

Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments of 1965 were passed authorizing federal funds for construction of rehabilitation centers, expansion of existing vocational rehabilitation programs and the creation of the National Commission on Architectural Barriers to Rehabilitation of the Handicapped.

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York was established by Congress.

1966

The President’s Committee on Mental Retardation was established by President Johnson.

Christmas in Purgatory by Burton Blatt and Fred Kaplan documented conditions at state institutions for people with developmental disabilities.

1968

The Architectural Barriers Act prohibited architectural barriers in all federally owned or leased buildings.

California legislature guaranteed that the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) would be the first rapid transit system in the U.S. to accommodate wheelchair users.

1970

The Urban Mass Transit Act required all new mass transit vehicles be equipped with wheelchair lifts. APTA delayed implementation for 20 years. Regulations were issued in 1990.

The Rolling Quads was started by Ed Roberts at U C Berkeley.

Disabled in Action was a group started by Judy Heumann at Long Island University, New York.

Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Amendments were passed which contained the first legal definition of developmental disabilities. They authorized grants for services and facilities for the rehabilitation of people with developmental disabilities and state DD Councils.

The Physically Disabled Students Program (PDSP) was founded by Ed Roberts, John Hessler, Hale Zukas and others at UC Berkeley. With its focus on community living, political advocacy and personal assistance services, it became the nucleus for the first Center for Independent Living, founded in 1972.

1971

The National Center for Law and the Handicapped was founded at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. It became the first legal advocacy center for people with disabilities in the U. S.

The U.S. District Court, Middle District of Alabama decided in *Wyatt v. Stickney* that people in residential state schools and institutions have a constitutional right “to receive such individual treatment as (would) give them a realistic opportunity to be cured or to improve his or her mental condition.” Disabled people were no longer to be locked away in custodial institutions without treatment or education.

The Mental Patients’ Liberation Project was initiated in New York City.

The Fair Labor Standard Act of 1938 was amended to bring people with disabilities (other than blindness) into the sheltered workshop system.

1972

The Berkeley Center for Independent Living was founded by Ed Roberts and associates with funds from the Rehabilitation Administration. It is recognized as the first center for independent living.

The Rehabilitation Act was passed by Congress and vetoed by Richard Nixon.

The U.S. District Court, District of Columbia ruled in *Mills v. Board of Education* that the District of Columbia could not exclude disabled children from the public schools.

The U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, in *PARC v. Pennsylvania* struck down various state laws used to exclude disabled children from the public schools. Advocates cited these decisions during public hearings that led to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Social Security Amendments of 1972 created the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The law relieved families of the financial responsibility of caring for their adult disabled children.

The Houston Cooperative Living Residential Project was established in Houston, Texas. It became a model for subsequent independent living programs.

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, founded in Washington, D.C. provided legal representation and advocated for the rights of people with mental illness.

Paralyzed Veterans of America, National Paraplegia Foundation and Richard Hedding filed suit against the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to incorporate accessibility into their design for a new, multibillion-dollar subway system in

Washington, D.C. Their victory was a landmark in the struggle for accessible public mass transit.

The Network Against Psychiatric Assault was organized in San Francisco.

In New York *ARC v. Rockefeller*, parents of residents at the Willow Brook State School in Staten Island, New York filed suit to end the appalling conditions at that institution. A television broadcast from the facility outraged the public. Eventually, thousands of people were moved into community-based living.

Disabled in Action demonstrated in New York City, protesting Nixon's veto of the Rehabilitation Act. Led by Judy Heumann, eighty activists staged a sit-in on Madison Avenue, stopping traffic. A flood of letters and protest calls were made.

Demonstrations were held by disabled activists in Washington, D.C. to protest Nixon's veto of the Rehabilitation Act. Among the demonstrators are Disabled in Action, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the National Paraplegia Foundation and others.

The Commonwealth of Virginia ceased its sterilization program. 8300 individuals never received justice regarding their sterilizations.

1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was passed. Sections 501, 503 and 504 prohibited discrimination in federal programs and services and all other programs or services receiving federal funds. Key language in the Rehabilitation Act, found in Section 504, states "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Washington, D.C. introduced handicap parking stickers.

The first Conference on Human Rights and Psychiatric Oppression held at the University of Detroit.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act authorized federal funds for construction of curb cuts.

The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board established under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 enforced the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities advocated for passage of what became the Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1975 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

1974

The Disabled Women's Coalition was founded at the University of California, Berkeley by Susan Sygall, Deborah Kaplan, Kitty Cone, Corbett O'Toole and Susan Shapiro.

Atlantis Community, Denver, Colorado was founded by Wade Blank who relocated adults with severe disabilities from nursing homes to apartments.

The Boston Center for Independent Living was established.

Halderman v. Pennhurst, filed in Pennsylvania on behalf of the residents of the Pennhurst State School and Hospital highlighted conditions at state schools for people with mental retardation. It became a precedent in the battle for deinstitutionalization, establishing a right to community services for people with developmental disabilities.

The first Client Assistant Project (CAP) was established to advocate for clients of state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

North Carolina passed a statewide building code with stringent access requirements. Drafted by access advocate Ronald Mace, the code became a model for effective architectural access legislation in other states.

Barrier Free Environments, founded by Ronald Mace, advocated for accessibility in buildings and products.

1975

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) required free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive setting. This Act was later renamed The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Developmental Disability Bill of Rights Act established protection and advocacy (P & A) services.

The Community Services Act created the Head Start Program. It stipulated that at least 10% of program openings were to be reserved for disabled children.

The Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act provided federal funds to programs serving people with developmental disabilities and outlined a series of rights for those who are institutionalized.

The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities was founded. It became the leading national cross-disability rights organization of the 1970s.

The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) was founded by special education professionals in response to PARC v. Pennsylvania (1972) and other right-to-education cases. This organization called for the end of aversive behavior modification and the closing of all residential institutions for people with disabilities.

U.S. Supreme Court ruled in O'Connor v. Donaldson that people cannot be institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital against their will unless they are determined to be a threat to themselves or to others.

Parent and Training Information Centers were developed to help parents of disabled children exercise their rights under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Ed Roberts was appointed Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation. He established nine independent living centers based on the Berkeley CIL model.

The Western Center on Law and the Handicapped was founded in Los Angeles.

1976

Centers for independent living are established in Houston and Chicago.

The Federal Communications Commission authorized reserving Line 21 on televisions for closed captions.

1976 (cont')

Higher Education Act of 1972 amendment provided services to physically disabled students entering college.

Disabled in Action of Pennsylvania, Inc. v. Coleman was known as the Transbus lawsuit. Disabled in Action of Pennsylvania, the American Coalition of Cerebral Palsy Associations and others were represented by the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia. They filed suit to require that all buses purchased by public transit authorities receiving federal funds meet Transbus specifications (making them wheelchair accessible).

Disabled in Action, New York City picketed the United Cerebral Palsy telethon calling telethons "demeaning and paternalistic shows which celebrate and encourage pity."

The Disability Rights Center was founded in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law, it specialized in consumer protection for people with disabilities.

The Westside Center for Independent Living, Los Angeles was one of the first nine independent living centers established by Ed Roberts, Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation.

1977

Joseph Califano, U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, refused to sign meaningful regulations for Section 504. After an ultimatum and deadline, demonstrations took place in ten U.S. cities on April 5th. The sit-in at the San Francisco Office of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare lasted until May 1st.

More than 150 demonstrators refused to disband. This action became the longest sit-in at a federal building to date.

Section 504 regulations were issued.

Max Cleland was appointed head of the U.S. Veterans Administration. He was the first severely disabled and youngest person to fill that position.

The White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals drew 3,000 disabled people to discuss federal policy toward people with disabilities. It resulted in numerous recommendations and acted as a catalyst for grassroots disability rights organizing.

Legal Services Corporation Act Amendments added financially needy people with disabilities to the list of those eligible for publicly funded legal services.

In *Lloyd v. Regional Transportation Authority*, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit ruled that individuals have a right to sue under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and that public transit authorities must provide accessible service.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, in *Snowden v. Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority* undermined this decision by ruling that authorities need to provide access only to “handicapped persons other than those confined to wheelchairs.”

1978

American Disabled for Public Transit (ADAPT) was founded. It held a transit bus hostage in Denver, Colorado. A yearlong civil disobedience campaign followed to force the Denver Transit Authority to purchase wheelchair lift-equipped buses.

The Adaptive Environments Center was founded in Boston.

Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1978 established the first federal funding for consumer-controlled independent living centers and created the National Council of the Handicapped under the U.S. Department of Education.

On Our Own: Patient Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System by Judi Chamberlin became the standard text of the psychiatric survivor movement.

The National Center for Law and the Deaf was founded in Washington, D.C.

Handicapping America by Frank Bowe was a comprehensive review of the policies and attitudes denying equal citizenship to people with disabilities. It became a standard text of the general disability rights movement.

1979

Part B funds created ten new centers for independent living across the U.S.

Vermont Center for Independent Living, the first statewide independent living center in the U.S., was founded by representatives of Vermont disability groups.

In *Southeastern Community College v. Davis*, the Supreme Court ruled that under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, programs receiving federal funds must make “reasonable modifications” to enable the participation of otherwise qualified disabled individuals. This decision was the Court’s first ruling on Section 504 establishing reasonable modification as an important principle in disability rights law.

The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), founded in Berkeley, California, became the nation’s leading disability rights legal advocacy center. It participated in landmark litigation and lobbying of the 1980s and 1990s.

1980

The National Disabled Women's Educational Equity Project, Berkeley, California, was established by Corbett O'Toole. Based at DREDF, the Project administered the first national survey on disability and gender and conducted the first national Conference on Disabled Women's Educational Equity held in Bethesda, Maryland.

Social Security Amendments, Section 1619 was passed. Designed to address work disincentives within the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs, other provisions mandated a review of Social Security recipients. This led to the termination of benefits of hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities.

The Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act authorized the U.S. Justice Department to file civil suits on behalf of residents of institutions whose rights were being violated.

Disabled Peoples’ International was founded in Singapore with participation of advocates from Canada and the United States.

1981-1984

The Reagan Administration threatened to amend or revoke regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Disability rights advocates Patrisha Wright (DREDF) and Evan Kemp, Jr. (Disability Rights Center) led an intense lobbying and grassroots campaign that generated more than 40,000 cards and letters. After three years, the Reagan Administration abandoned its attempts to revoke or amend the regulations.

The Reagan Administration terminated the Social Security benefits of hundreds of thousands of disabled recipients. Distressed by this action, several disabled people committed suicide. A variety of groups including the Alliance of Social Security Disability Recipients and the Ad Hoc Committee on Social Security Disability fought these terminations.

1981

The International Year of Disabled Persons began. During the year, governments were encouraged to sponsor programs bringing people with disabilities into the mainstream of their societies.

The parents of “Baby Doe” in Bloomington, Indiana were advised by their doctors to decline surgery to unblock their newborn’s esophagus because the baby had Down's syndrome. Although disability rights activists tried to intervene, “Baby Doe” starved to death before legal action was taken.

The Telecommunications for the Disabled Act mandated telephone access for deaf and hard-of-hearing people at public places like hospitals and police stations. All coin-operated telephones had to be hearing aid-compatible by January 1985. The Act called for state subsidies for production and distribution of TDD’s.

1983

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) was founded by Max Starkloff, Charlie Carr and Marca Bristo.

A national ADAPT action was held for accessible transportation in Denver, Colorado at the American Public Transit Association (APTA) Convention.

The World Institute on Disability (WID) was established by Ed Roberts, Judy Heumann and Joan Leon.

The Disabled Children’s Computer Group (DCCG) was founded in Berkeley, California.

The National Council on the Handicapped called for Congress to include persons with disabilities in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other civil and voting rights legislation and regulations.

The United Nations expanded the International Year of Disabled Persons to the International Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992).

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) was founded by the President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped to provide information to businesses with disabled employees.

Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act provided for the Client Assistance Program (CAP), an advocacy program for consumers of rehabilitation and independent living services.

1984

Ted Kennedy, Jr., spoke from the platform of the Democratic National Convention on disability rights.

The “Baby Jane Doe” case involved an infant being denied needed medical care because of her disability. The litigation argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bowen v. American Hospital Association* resulted in the passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1984.

The U.S. Supreme Court, *Irving Independent School District v. Tatro* ruled that school districts are required under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 to provide intermittent catheterization performed by the school nurse or a nurse’s aide as a “related service” to a disabled student. School districts can no longer refuse to educate a disabled child because they might need such service.

The National Council of the Handicapped became an independent federal agency.

The Social Security Disability Reform Act was passed in response to the complaints of hundreds of thousands of people whose social security disability benefits were terminated. The law required that payment of benefits and health insurance coverage continue for terminated recipients until they exhausted their appeals.

The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act mandated that polling places be accessible.

1985

The Mental Illness Bill of Rights Act required states to provide protection and advocacy services for people with psychological disabilities.

Final legal hearings on eugenics were held in the Commonwealth of Virginia. No financial settlement was granted.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Burlington School Committee v. Department of Education* that schools must pay the expenses of disabled children enrolled in private programs during litigation under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, if the courts ruled that such placement is needed to provide the child with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center* that localities cannot use zoning laws to prohibit group homes for people with developmental disabilities from opening in a residential area solely because its residents are disabled.

The International Polio Network, St. Louis, Missouri, founded by Gini Laurie, began advocating for recognition of post-polio syndrome.

The National Association of Psychiatric Survivors was founded.

1986

Toward Independence, a report of the National Council on the Handicapped, outlined the legal status of Americans with disabilities and documented the existence of discrimination. It cited the need for federal civil rights legislation (eventually passed as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

Concrete Change, a grassroots organization advocating accessible housing, was organized in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Employment Opportunities for Disabled Americans Act was passed allowing recipients of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance to retain benefits, particularly medical coverage, after they obtain work.

The Protection and Advocacy for Mentally Ill Individuals Act was passed setting up protection and advocacy (P & A) agencies for people who are in-patients or residents of mental health facilities.

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 defined supported employment as a “legitimate rehabilitation outcome.”

1987

Justin Dart, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, was forced to resign after he testified to Congress that “an inflexible federal system, like the society it represents, still contains a significant portion of individuals who have not yet overcome obsolete, paternalistic attitudes toward disability...”

The Alliance for Technology Access was founded in California by the Disabled Children’s Computer Group and the Apple Computer Office of Special Education.

1988

The Air Carrier Access Act was passed prohibiting airlines from refusing to serve people simply because they are disabled and from charging people with disabilities more for airfare than non-disabled travelers.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act counteracted bad case law by clarifying Congress’ original intention. Under the Rehabilitation Act, discrimination in any program or service that receives federal funding – not just the part which actually and directly receives the funding – is illegal.

The Fair Housing Act amendments prohibited housing discrimination against people with disabilities and families with children. It also provided for architectural accessibility of certain new housing units, renovation of existing units and accessibility modifications at the renter’s expense.

The "Deaf President Now" protest was held at Gallaudet University. I. King Jordan became the first deaf president of Gallaudet University.

ADAPT protested inaccessible Greyhound buses.

The Technology-Related Assistance Act for Individuals with Disabilities was passed authorizing federal funding to state projects designed to facilitate access to assistive technology.

The Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities was created by Rep. Major R. Owens, with Justine Dart and Elizabeth Boggs, co-chairs. The Task Force began building grassroots support for passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Congress overturned Ronald Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987.

In *Honig v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the stay-put rule established under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. School authorities cannot expel or suspend or otherwise move disabled children from the setting agreed upon in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) without a due process hearing.

1989

In *ADAPT v. Skinner*, the Federal Appeals Court ruled that federal regulations requiring that transit authorities spend only 3% of their budgets on access are arbitrary and discriminatory.

The original version of the American with Disabilities Act was introduced in 1988. It was redrafted and reintroduced in Congress. Disability organizations across the country advocated on its behalf (Patrisha Wright, Marilyn Golden, Liz Savage, Justin Dart Jr., and Elizabeth Boggs, among others).

The Center for Universal Design (originally the Center for Accessible Housing) was founded by Ronald Mace in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Mouth: The Voice of Disability Rights began publication in Rochester, New York.

The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped was renamed the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed by George W. Bush. The Act provided comprehensive civil rights protection for people with disabilities. Closely modeled after the Civil Rights Act and Section 504, the law was the most sweeping disability rights legislation in history. It mandated that local, state and federal governments and programs be accessible, that businesses with more than 15 employees make "reasonable accommodations" for disabled workers and that public accommodations such as restaurants and stores make "reasonable modifications" to ensure access for disabled

members of the public. The act also mandated access in public transportation, communication, and in other areas of public life.

Sam Skinner, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, issued regulations mandating lifts on buses.

American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) organized The Wheels of Justice campaign in Washington, D.C. which drew hundreds of disabled people to support the Americans with Disabilities Act. Activists occupying the Capitol Rotunda were arrested when they refuse to leave.

The Committee of Ten Thousand was founded to advocate for people with hemophilia who were infected with HIV/AIDS through tainted blood products.

The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act was passed to help communities cope with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) changed its focus to advocating for personal assistance services, changing its name to American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

1992

Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act were infused with the philosophy of independent living.

1993

The American Indian Disability Legislation Project was established to collect data on Native American disability rights laws and regulations.

A legal case of four men convicted of sexual assault and conspiracy for raping a 17-year old mentally disabled woman in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, highlighted the widespread sexual abuse of people with developmental disabilities.

Robert Williams was appointed Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. He is the first developmentally disabled person to be named the Commissioner.

Holland v. Sacramento City Unified School District affirmed the right of disabled children to attend public school classes with non-disabled children. The ruling was a major victory in the ongoing effort to ensure enforcement of IDEA.

1995

Maria Rantho, South African Federation of Disabled People's Vice-Chair, was elected to Nelson Mandela's Parliament in South Africa. Ronah Moyo, head of the women's wing of the Zimbabwe Federation of Disabled People, was elected to Robert Mugabe's Parliament in Zimbabwe. Both women felt they faced an uphill struggle with legislators who were ignorant of the needs of people with disabilities.

The First International Symposium on Issues of Women with Disabilities was held in Beijing, China in conjunction with the Fourth World Conference on Women.

ACLIFM, an organization of people with disabilities in Cuba, held its first international conference on disability rights in Havana, Cuba.

Justice for All was organized by Justin Dart and others in Washington, D.C.

When Billy Broke His Head...and Other Tale of Wonder premiered on PBS. The film is about the disability rights movement.

The American Association of People with Disabilities was founded in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit in *Helen L. v. Snider* ruled that continued institutionalization of a disabled Pennsylvania woman, when not medically necessary and where there is the option of home care, was a violation of her rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Disability rights advocates perceived this ruling as a landmark decision regarding the rights of people in nursing homes to personal assistance services.

Sandra Jensen, a member of People First, was denied a heart-lung transplant by the Stanford University School of Medicine because she has Down's syndrome. After pressure from disability rights activists, Stanford U School of Medicine administrators reversed their decision. In 1996, Jensen became the first person with Down's syndrome to receive a heart-lung transplant.

1996

Congress passed legislation eliminating more than 150,000 disabled children from Social Security rolls along with persons with alcohol and drug dependencies.

Not Dead Yet, formed by disabled advocates to oppose those who support assisted suicide for people with disabilities, focused on the idea of rationing health care to people with severe disabilities and imposition of "do not resuscitate" (DNR) orders for disabled people in hospitals, schools, and nursing homes.

In *Vacco v. Quill* and *Washington v. Glucksberg*, the Supreme Court validated the state prohibition on physician-assisted suicide, deciding that the issue is within the jurisdiction of the states.

1998

The Persian Gulf War Veterans Act was passed.

In *Bragdon v. Abbott*, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the definition of disability includes asymptomatic HIV.

In *Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey*, the Supreme Court decided that the Americans with Disabilities Act includes state prisons.

1999

In *Carolyn C. Cleveland v. Policy Management Systems Corporation, et. al.*, the Supreme Court decided that people receiving Social Security disability benefits are protected against discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act if and when they are able to return to work.

In *Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.*, the Supreme Court decided that individuals with disabilities must be offered services in the most integrated setting.

In three employment cases (*Sutton et. al. v. United Air Lines, Inc.*, *Murphy v. United Parcel Service, Inc.* and *Albertsons, Inc. v. Kirkingburg*) the Supreme Court decided that individuals whose conditions do not substantially limit any life activity and are easily correctable are not disabled under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Works Incentives Improvement Act (Ticket to Work) became law, allowing those who require health care benefits to work.

2001

The Commonwealth of Virginia House of Delegates approved a resolution expressing regret for its eugenics practices between 1924 and 1979.